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Agenda item 8
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-fourth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 3 (c))

Further developments of topics for a pilot evaluation

1. At its second meeting, on 7 June 2004, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on further development of topics for a pilot thematic evaluation (E/AC.51/2004/2).

2. The representative of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) introduced the report and responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The proposal to conduct thematic evaluations was welcomed and supported. The view was expressed that thematic evaluations would provide an assessment of the cumulative effect of programmes with common purposes. It was noted that the benefits of thematic evaluations as discussed in the report were important, and that the findings of those evaluations would allow the Committee to address coordination and cooperation among United Nations programmes. It was further noted that thematic evaluations were relevant to the Secretary-General's reform for strengthening monitoring and evaluation as well as to the new budget process.

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4. The view was expressed that OIOS had provided a very thorough presentation in its report on the three topics proposed for consideration. All three topics were noted to have merit and to be relevant to the priorities of the United Nations. The points were raised that consideration should be given to which proposal would make the greatest contribution to the current work of the United Nations and which would best contribute to strengthening the Organization.

5. It was noted that thematic evaluations would not be favoured over in-depth evaluations but instead would be complementary. It was further noted that the comparative advantage of thematic evaluations was their focus on a single cross-cutting issue, thus enabling a more systemic review of United Nations programmes that shared common goals and objectives.

6. Regarding which topic to select, delegations stressed their readiness to be flexible in the selection. The strongest interest was expressed for the first two proposed topics: (a) information systems supporting the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed development goals; and (b) linkages between headquarters and field activities: a review of best practices in the development arena.

7. The first topic was noted to have several advantages. The view was expressed that that topic was particularly relevant given that the Secretary-General was required to report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2005 and given the pressing need to implement them; the view was also expressed that it was at the cross-roads of information technology and communication for development. It was further noted that there had been an accumulation of development agreements reached at various world summits and conferences and that there was a need to assess the implementation of those agreements.

8. The views were also expressed that the second topic had direct relevance to the Millennium Declaration and would encompass a wide range of development issues, including development goals. It was noted that it would be most useful to have a wide-ranging discussion on development and that the complementarities between headquarters and field activities were very important.

9. The view was expressed that the third topic, concerning United Nations prevention of and response to natural disasters, also had merit and relevance, in particular given the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, in 2005.

10. Several delegations expressed a desire to consult with their colleagues regarding the final selection of a topic. The view was also expressed that further discussion on which topic to select for the thematic evaluation would be welcomed.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. **The Committee agreed that the Office of Internal Oversight Services should undertake a thematic evaluation for submission to the Committee at its forty-fifth session. Noting that all the themes were important and had merit, the Committee selected the theme: "Linkages between headquarters and field activities: a review of best practices for poverty eradication in the framework of the United Nations Millennium Declaration".**